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NORTH REELING AMID FERTILIZER SHORTAGE

- Farmers in Punjab, Haryana, MP, Rajasthan and UP are worried over shortage of di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) fertilizer
- In UP, a farmer reportedly died while standing in queue to buy DAP
- Currently, these states have only 1.5 lakh MT of DAP against the total requirement of 5.5 lakh MT
- 4.8 lakh MT is required during Oct-Nov for wheat crop alone | P10

BORDER ROW

India bristles at China's land boundary law

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

CHINA's unilateral declaration of a new land boundary law will have serious implications on existing bilateral agreements on border management, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Wednesday.

MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said New Delhi hopes Beijing will avoid taking any action under the pretext of the new law that could unilaterally alter the border situation.

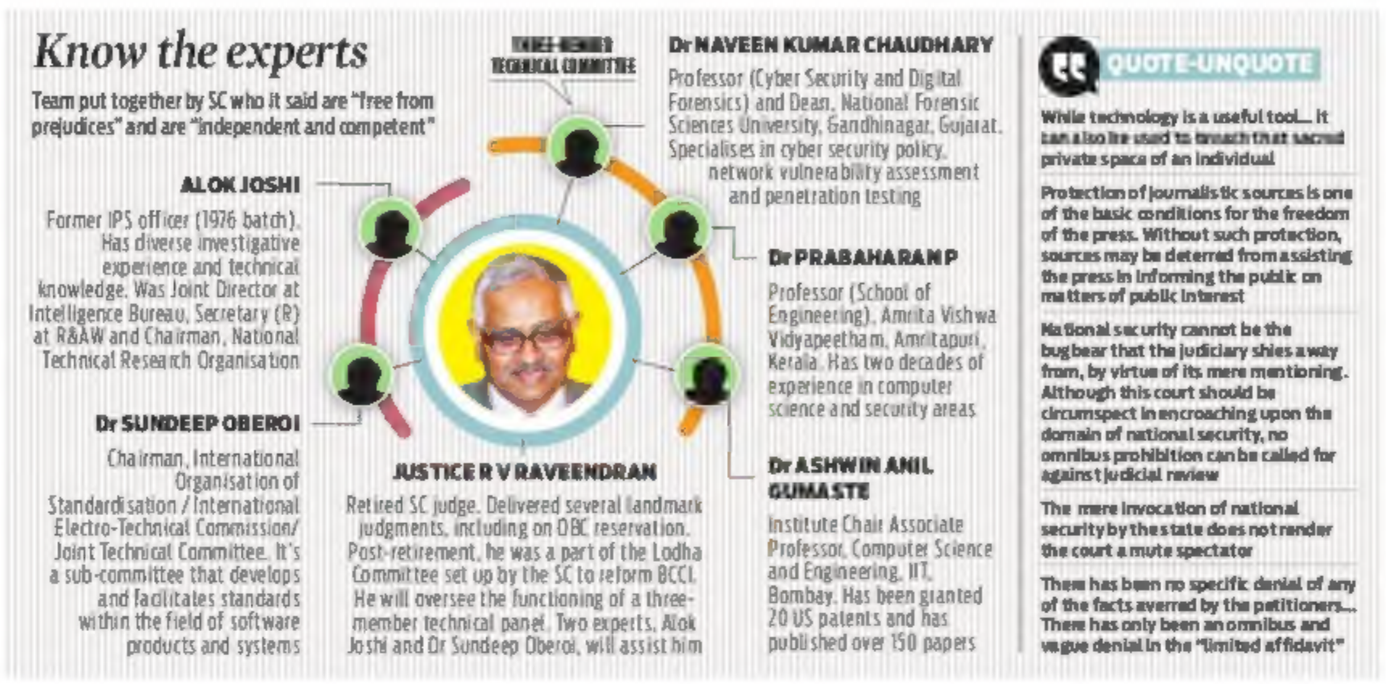
China's new law, which will come into force on January 1, states the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country are sacred and inviolable. It empowers the Chinese government to take measures to combat anything that undermines its perceived land boundaries. Experts fear China will dig in its heels at current positions at LAC and complicate matters the border dispute.

"The boundary question is of concern to India as the same remained unresolved between the two nations. Such unilateral move will have no bearing on the arrangements that both sides have already reached earlier, whether it is on the boundary question or for maintaining peace and tranquillity along LAC in India-China border areas," Bagchi said.

"The passage of this new law does not confer any legitimacy to the so-called China-Pakistan Boundary Agreement of 1963," he added.

No national security free pass: SC

Forms technical panel on Pegasus; says privacy curbs must stand constitutional scrutiny


Know the experts
Team put together by SC who it said are "free from prejudices" and are "independent and competent"
THREE-MEMBER TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
ALOK JOSHI
Former IPS officer (1976 batch). Has diverse investigative experience and technical knowledge. Was Joint Director at Intelligence Bureau, Secretary (R) at R&AW and Chairman, National Technical Research Organisation
Dr SUNDEEP OBEROI
Chairman, International Organisation of Standardisation / International Electro-Technical Commission/ Joint Technical Committee. It's a sub-committee that develops and facilitates standards within the field of software products and systems
JUSTICE R V RAVEENDRAN
Retired SC judge. Delivered several landmark judgments, including on OBC reservation. Post-retirement, he was a part of the Lodha Committee set up by the SC to reform BCCI. He will oversee the functioning of a three-member technical panel. Two experts, Alok Joshi and Dr Sundeep Oberoi, will assist him
Dr NAVEEN KUMAR CHAUDHARY
Professor (Cyber Security and Digital Forensics) and Dean, National Forensic Sciences University, Gandhinagar, Gujarat. Specialises in cyber security policy, network vulnerability assessment and penetration testing
Dr PRABAHARAN P
Professor (School of Engineering), Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Amritapuri, Kerala. Has two decades of experience in computer science and security areas
Dr ASHWIN ANIL GUMASTE
Institute Chair Associate Professor, Computer Science and Engineering, IIT, Bombay. Has been granted 20 US patents and has published over 150 papers

QUOTE-UNQUOTE

While technology is a useful tool... it can also be used to breach that sacred private space of an individual

Protection of journalistic sources is one of the basic conditions for the freedom of the press. Without such protection, sources may be deterred from assisting the press in informing the public on matters of public interest

National security cannot be the bugbear that the judiciary shies away from, by virtue of its mere mentioning. Although this court should be circumspect in encroaching upon the domain of national security, no omnibus prohibition can be called for against judicial review

The mere invocation of national security by the state does not render the court a mute spectator

There has been no specific denial of any of the facts averred by the petitioners... There has only been an omnibus and vague denial in the "limited affidavit"

KANU SARDA @ New Delhi

IN a hard-hitting order on the Pegasus snoopgate on Wednesday, the Supreme Court while constituting a three-member technical probe panel, said the state cannot get a free pass every time citing national security. It said the court can't remain a mute spectator when citizens need to be protected from violation of their privacy.

A three-member bench led by Chief Justice of India N V Ramana said it did not want to enter into any political thicket but India cannot remain silent to allegations of snooping when other countries have taken them seriously and kick-started efforts to know the truth. Pegasus is an Israeli spyware that is known to have targeted members of the civil society, including activists and journalists.

The committee comprising experts in cyber security, digital forensics, networks and hardware would be overseen by a supervisory panel led by former Supreme Court judge R V Raveendran (see box).

Extensively dealing with the right to privacy, the bench said restrictions can be permitted, but they have to stand constitutional scrutiny. "In today's world, restriction on privacy is to prevent terrorism activity and can only be imposed when needed to protect national security." Surveillance and how it is exercised, affects the right and freedom of people. Such technology may have a chilling effect on right to press, it said.

The court rejected the Centre's proposal to allow it to appoint the expert panel, saying it would violate the settled judicial principle against bias. "Justice should not only be done but seen to be done," it said while slating the hearing after eight weeks.

The ruling quoted from George Orwell's *1984*, "If you want to keep a secret, you must also hide it from yourself."

The order came on a batch of petitions demanding an independent inquiry into the Pegasus snooping row. "Some of the petitioners are direct victims of Pegasus. It is incumbent upon the Centre to seriously consider the use of such a technology," the bench said.

CONTINUED ON: P9

K'taka Govt increases Dearness Allowance

Bengaluru: The State Government has announced an increase in Dearness Allowance for its employees and pensioners from the existing 21.5 pc to 24.5 pc, with retrospective effect from July 1 this year. The order will apply to full-time government staff and employees of Zilla Panchayats, among others | P6

KARNATAKA	OCT 26	OCT 27
Fresh cases	12,428	13,451
Recoveries	15,051	14,021
Deaths	366	585

KARNATAKA	OCT 26	OCT 27
Fresh cases	277	282
Recoveries	343	349
Deaths	7	13

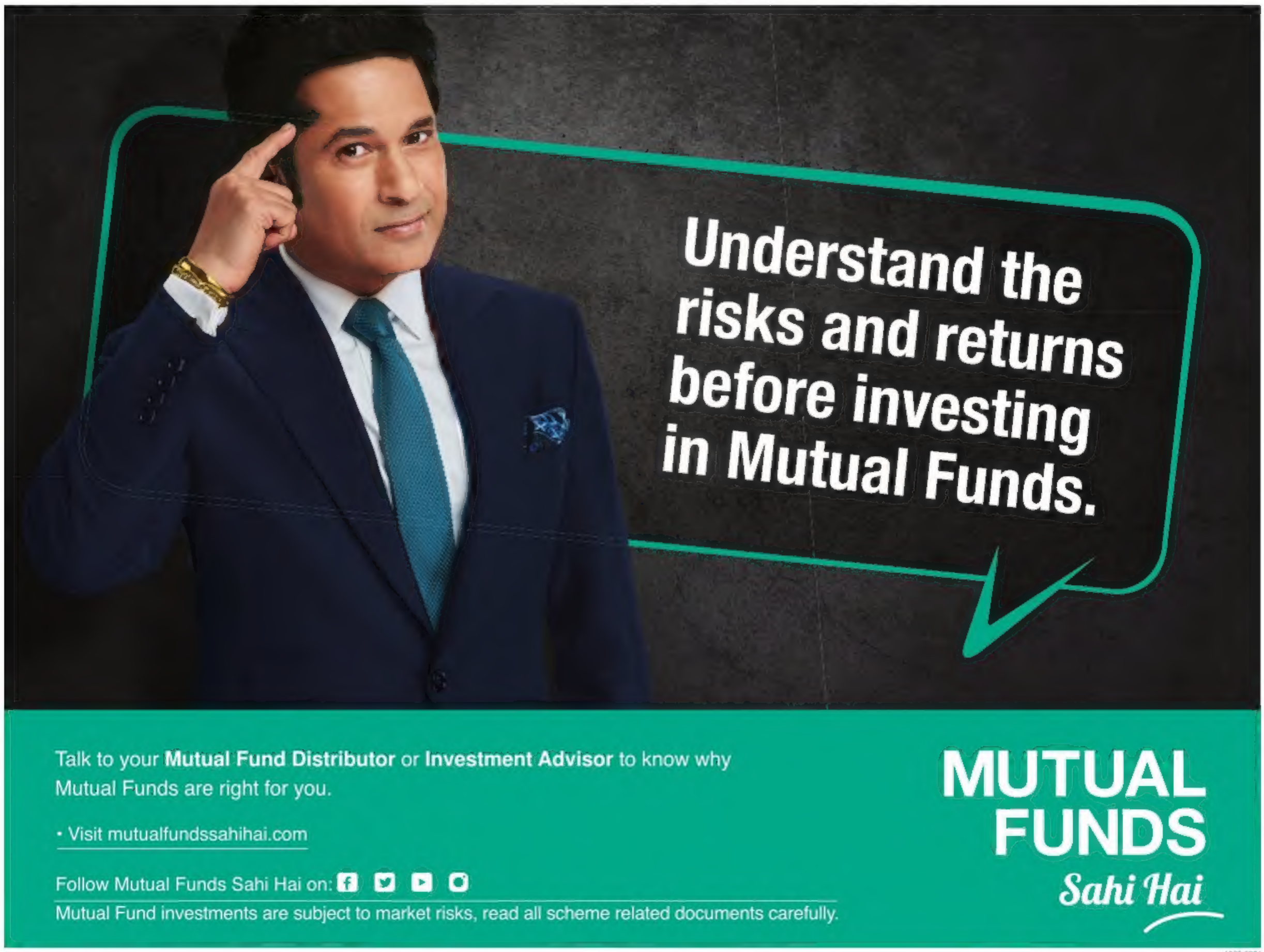
KRS almost full, but no water for farmers

K S SHIVA KUMAR @ Mysuru

THE Krishnaraja Sagar (KRS) reservoir, considered the lifeline of Bengaluru, Mandya and Mysuru districts, is brimming, thanks to copious unseasonal rain that has lashed the catchment areas in Kodagu and Mysuru. But there's no cheer for farmers of Mandya and Mysuru districts as they are unlikely to get water for a second paddy crop after neighbouring Tamil Nadu objected to "excess" use of water by Karnataka. As of Wednesday, the water level has risen from 120 ft to 124.16 ft, against a maximum capacity of 124.80 ft.

Senior Irrigation Department officials in Karnataka, who did not want to be named, said they are in a fix as Tamil Nadu's objection has tied their hands. But they also conceded that it may be difficult to deny water for crops when there is enough storage in the reservoir and felt it should be discussed at the government level. Based on the annual water account of the Cauvery basin for 2020-2021, Tamil Nadu had filed an objection before the Cauvery Water Regulatory Committee, alleging that Karnataka has used 2.178 tmcft of excess water during the kharif season, against the allotted 38.98 tmcft for the irrigated areas covered by the Visvesvaraya Canal and other smaller canals.

It also observed that sugarcane cultivation area has increased, which resulted in 0.41 tmcft extra water utilisation. Though Karnataka has claimed that water utilisation was nil under minor irrigation schemes such as Kanva, Chikkahole, Suvarnavathy, Yagachi, Gundar, Votehole, Manchanabele and Nallur Amanikere projects, it shows that rainfall was good for raising semi-dry kharif crop without any supplemental irrigation, the neighbouring state has argued. P4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